UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

GENERAL

E/1992/117
E/ECE/1270
27 October 1992

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL SESSION

(5 October 1992)

1. In accordance with the agreement reached by ECE member Governments meeting in Ad Hoc Informal Session on 25 June 1992, the Commission held a Special Session on the afternoon of 5 October 1992. It was attended by representatives from Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America. Representatives of the European Community also participated in the meeting.

2. Representatives of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), International Organization of Consumer's Unions (IOCU) and International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW) also participated in the meeting.

3. A list of participants can be found in document E/ECE(1992-S)/L.2.

4. Mr. William Rossier (Switzerland), Chairman of the Economic Commission for Europe, presided over the meeting.

5. The Commission adopted its agenda as contained in document E/ECE/1269.

Recommendations for the strengthening of the role and functions of the regional commissions, particularly the ECE (agenda item 2)

6. The Chairman recalled that the special session had been convened in order that the Commission might adopt recommendations on the strengthening of the role and functions of the Economic Commission for Europe to be submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration in accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 46/235. He referred to the meetings held by a Working Group of government representatives with the participation of the secretariat which had been set up by the Ad Hoc Informal Session of the Commission in June in order to elaborate recommendations on this subject. Those recommendations were contained in the draft resolution before the Commission as contained in

document E/ECE(1992-S)/L.1 entitled "Draft resolution on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields: Strengthening the role and functions of the regional commissions, particularly the Economic Commission for Europe". The Commission adopted the resolution without debate, and empowered the Chairman to transmit it to the President of the General Assembly. (For the text of resolution 1 (1992-S) see Annex.)

Other business (agenda item 3)

7. Under this item the Chairman made the following statement on behalf of ECE member States:

> **"The member States of the ECE would welcome the admission, as full members, of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union which have applied to join the ECE.**
>
> **Appropriate amendments to article 7, in particular to list all the member States, and possibly to other articles of the ECE's terms of reference, would have to be made. [1/]**
>
> **Pending the approval by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of any amendments, the member States of the ECE welcome the participation of the five newly independent republics in all the activities of the ECE immediately.**
>
> [1/] **It is understood that it will be up to the Working Group created by the Ad Hoc Informal Meeting of the Commission, on 5 October 1992, to see whether amendments to the ECE's mandate will be necessary or not."**

8. The Chairman indicated that, in accordance with the agreement reached by the Ad Hoc Informal Session of the Commission in the morning of 5 October, a Working Group of ECE government representatives would be set up to review the ECE terms of reference, in particular article 7, in the light of the welcome extended by the ECE member States to the above-mentioned applicant countries, on the understanding that any amendment to the terms of reference would need to be recommended to the Economic and Social Council for approval.

9. The present report of the Special Session was approved by the Bureau of the Commission on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.

ANNEX

1 (1992-S) RESTRUCTURING AND REVITALIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS: STRENGTHENING THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS, PARTICULARLY THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

The Economic Commission for Europe,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 46/235 of 13 April 1992 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, and noting in its paragraph 6 that the regional commissions are requested to provide recommendations, for consideration by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, on strengthening their effectiveness,

Bearing in mind its mandate, for raising the level of European economic activity and for maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of the European countries both among themselves and with other countries of the world, and conscious of its role as an instrument for the implementation of the principles and aims of the United Nations Charter at the regional level,

Noting that the ECE membership has increased from 34 in 1990 to 43 at the present time, among them a considerable number of newly independent States, a further increase being likely to occur,

Aware that this recent development adds a new dimension to the Commission and has placed new and urgent demands on the ECE and its secretariat, in terms of economic cooperation and assistance, in particular in the context of the transition process,

Convinced that the strengthening of cooperation in the economic and related fields within the framework of the ECE constitutes a major contribution from the UN system to the efforts presently undertaken in the region to assist countries in their transition to market economies and their integration into the world economy, and represents an important contribution to global economic and social development,

Taking into account the increased efforts made by the international community to assist the economies in transition by actions taken in other fora such as, among others, IMF, IBRD, EBRD, the OECD and the G24,

Noting the recognition by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in its Charter of Paris for a New Europe (November 1990) and in its Helsinki Summit Declaration and Decisions (July 1992) of "a key role" to be played by the ECE, together with the EBRD and the OECD, in the construction of a new Europe,

Convinced of the necessity to ensure, in response to ECOSOC decision 1992/43, that all ECE member States can participate fully and effectively, in the work of the Commission,

1. Draws the attention of the General Assembly to the following elements:

(a) The comparative advantages of the ECE as a multilateral forum for all-European cooperation in the economic and related fields, with an important trans-atlantic dimension, where all member States participate on an equal footing; the longevity of cooperation among all countries of the ECE region, which has over the years provided the ECE with a profound knowledge of those countries, their problems and their priorities; its well-established intergovernmental machinery and network of government contacts; and its capacity for an interdisciplinary approach and for the adaptation of its programme of work;

(b) The important contribution made by the ECE to the process of restructuring and the revitalization of the regional commissions of the UN, called for in General Assembly resolutions 32/197 and 45/264, through its decisions O (45) and P (45) adopted, on 14 December 1990, in response to the rapid and radical changes in the region after an in-depth review of its programme and methods of work, namely by establishing five priority areas of work and by streamlining the structure and the activities of the Commission;

(c) The necessity to strengthen the cooperation and the coordination of activities between ECE and other international organizations, institutions and programmes both within and outside the UN system in order to avoid duplication of work and to ensure optimal use of resources;

2. Stresses:

(a) The concern of the ECE member States regarding the timely provision of adequate resources for servicing of the priority sectors of the ECE, requested in its decision B (47), and hindered by the temporary suspension of external recruitment; the protracted procedure for the appointment of staff; and delays in the allotment in the ECE's budgetary allocation;

(b) The importance of a speedy and effective implementation of the ECE programme in favour of the countries in transition initiated by ECE decisions D (45), O (45) and D (47), and the need to explore ways and means of releasing and obtaining adequate resources for this programme;

3. Recommends, in the light of the experience gained by the ECE since its internal restructuring and revitalization process started in December 1990 and in order to continue in the future to fulfil efficiently its mandate, that the following measures should be taken:

(a) As recommended in paragraph 26, Annex IV of Assembly resolution 32/197, the necessary authority should be delegated from Headquarters to the ECE and adequate budgetary and financial provision should be made to enable the ECE to implement its mandated programme of work and to discharge its responsibility for coordination and cooperation at the regional level within the UN system, in close cooperation with the efforts undertaken by other relevant international bodies;

(b) In order to avoid duplication of work under way in the ECE by other UN programmes and to ensure a more rational use of available resources, action should

be taken to achieve a more effective distribution of responsibilities and a better balance of functions between the ECE, on the one hand, and Headquarters and global programmes outside Headquarters, on the other hand;

(c) The results of ECE activities should continue to constitute regional inputs for global policy-making processes and conferences of the competent UN organs, and the ECE should be invited to participate fully in the regional implementation of the relevant policy and programme decisions taken by those organs;

(d) The results of ECE's programme and operational project activities, wherever appropriate, should continue to be made available for the benefit of the countries of the other regions, by means of a strengthened outreach programme, such as UN/EDIFACT, and interregional cooperation with the other regional commissions and the global programmes of the United Nations;

4. Also recommends that the activities undertaken at the regional level, in the economic, social and related fields, by relevant UN organs, be regularly and efficiently evaluated, in order to reach a high quality of work and an efficient use of available resources;

5. Decides to transmit this resolution to the forty-seventh General Assembly of the United Nations as a contribution of the ECE for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields being currently undertaken by the General Assembly.